CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A method comprising:
starting a packet timer in response to receipt of a packet, the packet timer having a first threshold;
starting an absolute timer in response to receipt of the packet, the absolute timer having a second threshold;
restarting the packet timer when another packet is received prior to expiration of the first threshold;
asserting an interrupt if the first threshold expires; and
asserting the interrupt if the second threshold expires.

2. The method of claim 1, further comprising:
stopping the packet timer when said another packet passes filtering;
completing receipt of said another packet; and
restarting the packet timer when receipt of said another packet is complete.

3. The method of claim 1, further comprising providing the interrupt, when asserted, to a network driver.

4. A method comprising:
starting a packet timer in response to receipt of a packet, the packet timer having a first threshold;
starting an absolute timer in response to receipt of the packet, the absolute timer having a second threshold;
receiving another packet prior to expiration of the first threshold; and
restarting the packet timer.

5. The method of claim 4, further comprising:
asserting an interrupt if the first threshold expires; and
asserting the interrupt if the second threshold expires.

6. The method of claim 4, further comprising:
stopping the packet timer when said another packet passes filtering; and
restarting the packet timer when receipt of said another packet is complete.

7. A method comprising:
starting a packet timer in response to receipt of a packet, the packet timer having a first threshold;
starting an absolute counter in response to receipt of the packet, the absolute counter having a second threshold;
restarting the packet timer when another packet is received prior to expiration of the first threshold;
asserting an interrupt if the first threshold expires; and
asserting the interrupt if the second threshold expires.

8. The method of claim 7, wherein the absolute counter comprises a byte counter, the method further comprising decrementing the byte counter by a number of received bytes when said another packet is received prior to expiration of the first threshold.

9. The method of claim 7, wherein the absolute counter comprises a packet counter, the method further comprising decrementing the packet counter by one packet when said another packet is received prior to expiration of the first threshold.

10. The method of claim 7, further comprising:
stopping the packet timer when said another packet passes filtering;
completing receipt of said another packet; and
restarting the packet timer when receipt of said another packet is complete.

11. The method of claim 7, further comprising providing the interrupt, when asserted, to a network driver.

12. A method comprising:
starting a packet timer in response to receipt of a packet, the packet timer having a first threshold;
starting an absolute counter in response to receipt of the packet, the absolute counter having a second threshold;
receiving another packet prior to expiration of the first threshold; and
restarting the packet timer.

13. The method of claim 12, wherein the absolute counter comprises a byte counter, the method further comprising decrementing the byte counter by a number of received bytes.

14. The method of claim 12, wherein the absolute counter comprises a packet counter, the method further comprising decrementing the packet counter by one packet.

15. The method of claim 12, further comprising:
asserting an interrupt if the first threshold expires; and
asserting the interrupt if the second threshold expires.

16. The method of claim 12, further comprising:
stopping the packet timer when said another packet passes filtering; and
restarting the packet timer when receipt of said another packet is complete.

17. A network interface comprising:
a packet timer having a first threshold, the packet timer started in response to receipt of a packet from a network, the packet timer restarted in response to receipt of another packet prior to expiration of the first threshold;
an absolute timer having a second threshold, the absolute timer started in response to receipt of the packet from the network; and
a controller to assert an interrupt if the first threshold expires and to assert the interrupt if the second threshold expires.

18. The network interface of claim 17, wherein the packet timer stops when said another packet passes filtering and restarts when receipt of said another packet is complete.

19. The network interface of claim 17, wherein the controller is coupled with a memory having a network driver resident thereon, the controller to provide the interrupt to the network driver.

20. A network interface comprising:
a packet timer having a first threshold, the packet timer started in response to receipt of a packet from a network, the packet timer restarted in response to receipt of another packet prior to expiration of the first threshold;
an absolute counter having a second threshold, the absolute counter started in response to receipt of the packet from the network; and
a controller to assert an interrupt if the first threshold expires and to assert the interrupt if the second threshold expires.

21. The network interface of claim 20, the absolute counter comprising a byte counter, the byte counter decremented by a number of received bytes in response to receipt of said another packet prior to expiration of the first threshold.

22. The network interface of claim 20, the absolute counter comprising a packet counter, the packet counter decremented by one packet in response to receipt of said another packet prior to expiration of the first threshold.

23. The network interface of claim 20, wherein the packet timer stops when said another packet passes filtering and restarts when receipt of said another packet is complete.

24. The network interface of claim 20, wherein the controller is coupled with a memory having a network driver resident thereon, the controller to provide the interrupt to the network driver.

25. A system comprising:
a processor coupled with a bus; and
a network interface coupled with the bus and further coupled with a network, the network interface including
a packet timer having a first threshold, the packet timer started in response to receipt of a packet from a network, the packet timer restarted in response to receipt of another packet prior to expiration of the first threshold;
an absolute timer having a second threshold, the absolute timer started in response to receipt of the packet from the network; and
a controller to assert an interrupt if the first threshold expires and to assert the interrupt if the second threshold expires.

26. The system of claim 25, further comprising:
a main memory coupled with the bus; and
a network driver resident in the main memory, the network driver to process the interrupt.

27. The system of claim 25, wherein the packet timer stops when said another packet passes filtering and restarts when receipt of said another packet is complete.

28. The system of claim 25, the network interface comprising a peripheral card.

29. A system comprising:
a processor coupled with a bus; and
a network interface coupled with the bus and further coupled with a network, the network interface including
a packet timer having a first threshold, the packet timer started in response to receipt of a packet from a network, the packet timer restarted in response to receipt of another packet prior to expiration of the first threshold;
an absolute counter having a second threshold, the absolute counter started in response to receipt of the packet from the network; and
a controller to assert an interrupt if the first threshold expires and to assert the interrupt if the second threshold expires.

30. The system of claim 29, further comprising:
a main memory coupled with the bus; and
a network driver resident in the main memory, the network driver to process the interrupt.

31. The system of claim 29, the absolute counter comprising a byte counter, the byte counter decremented by a number of received bytes in response to receipt of said another packet prior to expiration of the first threshold.

32. The system of claim 29, the absolute counter comprising a packet counter, the packet counter decremented by one packet in response to receipt of said another packet prior to expiration of the first threshold.

33. The system of claim 29, wherein the packet timer stops when said another packet passes filtering and restarts when receipt of said another packet is complete.

34. The system of claim 29, the network interface comprising a peripheral card.

35. An article of manufacture comprising:
a machine accessible medium providing content that, when accessed by a machine, causes the machine to
start a packet timer in response to receipt of a packet, the packet timer having a first threshold;
start an absolute timer in response to receipt of the packet, the absolute timer having a second threshold;
restart the packet timer when another packet is received prior to expiration of the first threshold;
assert an interrupt if the first threshold expires; and
assert the interrupt if the second threshold expires.

36. The article of manufacture of claim 35, wherein the content, when accessed, further causes the machine to:
stop the packet timer when said another packet passes filtering;
complete receipt of said another packet; and
restart the packet timer when receipt of said another packet is complete.

37. The article of manufacture of claim 35, wherein the content, when accessed, further causes the machine to provide the interrupt, when asserted, to a network driver.

38. An article of manufacture comprising:
a machine accessible medium providing content that, when accessed by a machine, causes the machine to
start a packet timer in response to receipt of a packet, the packet timer having a first threshold;
start an absolute counter in response to receipt of the packet, the absolute counter having a second threshold;
restart the packet timer when another packet is received prior to expiration of the first threshold;
assert an interrupt if the first threshold expires; and
assert the interrupt if the second threshold expires.

39. The article of manufacture of claim 38, the absolute counter comprising a byte counter, wherein the content, when accessed, further causes the machine to decrement the byte counter by a number of received bytes when said another packet is received prior to expiration of the first threshold.

40. The article of manufacture of claim 38, the absolute counter comprising a packet counter, wherein the content, when accessed, further causes the machine to decrement the packet counter by one packet when said another packet is received prior to expiration of the first threshold.

41. The article of manufacture of claim 38, wherein the content, when accessed, further causes the machine to:
stop the packet timer when said another packet passes filtering;
complete receipt of said another packet; and
restart the packet timer when receipt of said another packet is complete.

42. The article of manufacture of claim 38, wherein the content, when accessed, further causes the machine to provide the interrupt, when asserted, to a network driver.